

comprehensively. I believe that the FAST Act will go a long way toward providing the simplicity, fairness and clarity that are needed for long-term growth. As we consider economic stimulus proposals in the days and weeks ahead, I hope my colleagues will join me in pursuing this pro-growth reform agenda.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
GREATER HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 20th anniversary of the Greater Houston Partnership. I ask my colleagues and those visitors in the House Chamber to join me in congratulating the Greater Houston Partnership and applauding the many achievements they have accomplished over the past 20 years.

In 1989, the Houston Chamber of Commerce, the Houston Economic Development Council and the Houston World Trade Center joined together to make the dream of an organization that would be an advocate for the business community in the greater Houston area a reality.

The Greater Houston Partnership has grown into an influential organization that now has two thousand member businesses and serves 10 fast growing counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto and Waller.

The Partnership has had an impressive impact on the region. In the last year, 53 percent of all jobs created in the United States were created in Texas—and one in four of those were in Houston. This is astounding and a testimony to the contributions the Greater Houston Partnership has made to cultivate a vibrant business environment. The Partnership's efforts are focused on building Houston's prosperity and promoting regional economic development. The Partnership is actively involved with public policy issues and works with local elected officials to ensure the Greater Houston community is well represented in areas such as clean air, education and transportation.

In its two decades of existence there is much to be proud of. It is an honor to recognize such an impressive organization. All Americans can learn from the collaborative example the Greater Houston Partnership continues to display through their leadership and guidance to the people and businesses in the Greater Houston community.

Madam Speaker, today more than ever, we must support the efforts of the Greater Houston Partnership and other similar organizations across the country. The work they do to help create jobs in our country is essential for continued economic growth and stability in the face of the global economic changes. I urge you to join me in congratulating the Greater Houston Partnership for 20 years of serving as the voice for the greater Houston business community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESCRIPTION
DRUG AFFORDABILITY ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Prescription Drug Affordability Act. This legislation ensures that millions of Americans, including seniors, have access to affordable pharmaceutical products. My bill makes pharmaceuticals more affordable to seniors by reducing their taxes. It also removes needless government barriers to importing pharmaceuticals and it protects Internet pharmacies, which are making affordable prescription drugs available to millions of Americans, from being strangled by federal regulation.

The first provision of my legislation provides seniors a tax credit equal to 80 percent of their prescription drug costs. While Congress did add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare in 2003, many seniors still have difficulty affording the prescription drugs they need in order to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. One reason is because the new program creates a "doughnut hole," where seniors lose coverage once their prescription expenses reach a certain amount and must pay for their prescriptions above a certain amount out of their own pockets until their expenses reach a level where Medicare coverage resumes. This tax credit will help seniors cover the expenses provided by the doughnut hole. This bill will also help seniors obtain prescription medicines that may not be covered by the Medicare prescription drug program.

In addition to making prescription medications more affordable for seniors, my bill lowers the price for prescription medicines by reducing barriers to the importation of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals. Under my bill, anyone wishing to import a drug simply submits an application to the FDA, which then must approve the drug unless the FDA finds the drug is either not approved for use in the U.S. or is adulterated or misbranded. This process will make safe and affordable imported medicines affordable to millions of Americans. Madam Speaker, letting the free market work is the best means of lowering the cost of prescription drugs.

I need not remind my colleagues that many senior citizens and other Americans impacted by the high costs of prescription medicine have demanded Congress reduce the barriers which prevent American consumers from purchasing imported pharmaceuticals. Congress has responded to these demands by repeatedly passing legislation liberalizing the rules governing the importation of pharmaceuticals. However, implementation of this provision has been blocked by the federal bureaucracy. It is time Congress stood up for the American consumer and removed all unnecessary regulations on importing pharmaceuticals.

The Prescription Drug Affordability Act also protects consumers' access to affordable medicine by forbidding the Federal Government from regulating any Internet sales of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals by state-licensed pharmacists.

As I am sure my colleagues are aware, the Internet makes pharmaceuticals and other products more affordable and accessible for millions of Americans. However, the Federal

Government has threatened to destroy this option by imposing unnecessary and unconstitutional regulations on Web sites that sell pharmaceuticals. Any federal regulations would inevitably drive up prices of pharmaceuticals, thus depriving many consumers of access to affordable prescription medications.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to make pharmaceuticals more affordable and accessible by lowering taxes on senior citizens, removing barriers to the importation of pharmaceuticals and protecting legitimate Internet pharmacies from needless regulation by cosponsoring the Prescription Drug Affordability Act.

BAD POLLUTERS ACT

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand here today to introduce this bipartisan legislation that will help protect the Great Lakes from harmful pollution that poisons our water and closes our beaches. The Great Lakes are the world's largest freshwater system and serve as a source of drinking water, food, jobs and recreation for more than thirty million Americans. It is critical that we enhance our restoration efforts for this critical resource, not degrade the condition of the lakes even further.

In 2007, British Petroleum (BP) threatened to begin a billion-dollar expansion of its refinery facility in Whiting, Indiana which would have included a large increase of pollution into the Great Lakes. The company sought to discharge an increase of 54 percent more ammonia and 35 percent more sludge into Lake Michigan per day. This would have totaled a combined increase of more than 1,800 pounds per day of these pollutants which strangle aquatic life and contribute to the increasing number of beach closures each year.

Based on a provision in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, BP was eligible for a tax credit that would have allowed them to expense half of the capital costs in the first year of the expansion. Essentially, the government would have paid the company to pollute our lakes. While providing incentives to energy production and refinery expansion helps to lower gas prices and reduce our dependence on foreign oil, we must not do so at the expense of one of America's most treasured natural resources.

Fortunately, BP yielded to public pressure and chose not to move ahead with the expansion as planned. Due to the determination and cooperation of federal, state and local officials, environmental advocacy organizations and communities around the region, BP is now working with a coalition of scientists and small businesses to seek an environmentally friendly way to expand its refinery.

While I applaud BP for making the right decision in the end, we must ensure that no refinery ever comes as close to drastically harming our precious lakes. That is why I am introducing the Bad Polluters Act, which will deny the capital expensing tax credit to any refiner whose facility's NPDES permit allows for an increase in any pollutant above its 2006 levels into the Great Lakes. This will prevent companies from seeking to increase pollution into our

drinking water. In order to claim this important tax credit, companies will be forced to search a bit harder for a new solution to water treatment. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and join in the fight to protect our national treasure.

RECOGNIZING CARL BLESSER OF
BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Carl Blesser of Hernando County, Florida. Carl has done something that all of us strive to do, but that very few of us will ever accomplish, celebrate his 102nd birthday.

Carl Blesser was born June 1, 1906, in New York City, New York. Attending school in Albany with a degree in accounting, Carl went on to be a successful CPA. Marrying his sweetheart Nadine, the two spent many happy years together traveling. One of his fondest memories, in fact, is of a trip he took with his parents and wife to see the Empire State Building, as well as several trips to the American West.

Carl moved to Hernando County when his wife was ill, and remained here following her death. Truly devoted to Nadine, Carl states that his happiest moment was when he married his wife. If he could live his life over, Carl would travel more and would like to have met President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

A lover of books, Carl loves to go outside and read, and also enjoys going to the Golden Corral for his favorite shrimp dinner. Today he spends much of his time with his friends and loves to sit outside under the trees enjoying the beauty that Brooksville has to offer. His advice to young people today is to not smoke or drink so that they can live longer and better lives.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Carl Blesser for reaching his 102nd birthday. I hope we all have the good fortune to live as long as him.

HONORING MAXWELL EMORY
LANHAM

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Maxwell Emory Lanham of Kansas City, Missouri. Maxwell is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1261, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Maxwell has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Maxwell has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Maxwell Emory Lanham

for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING MASSACHUSETTS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN
A. LEPPER

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, today I rise in honor of John A. Lepper who is retiring after serving 14 years in the Massachusetts Legislature as State Representative for the city of Attleboro. I am proud to know and to have worked with Representative Lepper and I salute his many contributions to the citizens of Attleboro and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Representative Lepper began his career of public service in the 1980s as a member of the city of Attleboro Planning Board. He was elected to the Attleboro City Council in 1987 where he served for 6 years.

In 1995 he began his tenure as a member of the Massachusetts State Legislature and distinguished himself as a champion for children, families, and persons with disabilities. He is highly regarded for his work on a commission that championed the rights of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. This issue is especially important to Mr. Lepper as he and his wife have devoted many years of their lives raising two of their grandchildren.

In his retirement, Representative Lepper is looking forward to staying involved with local politics but plans to take some time to relax at first and do some fishing.

Madam Speaker, I am certain that the entire House of Representatives joins me in congratulating State Representative John A. Lepper for all that he has accomplished and in wishing him the best in his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, the American automobile industry faces almost certain extinction if this body fails to act at this time. I cannot in good conscience allow that to happen. I will therefore vote for this legislation today, December 10, 2008, but I do so with some reservations.

Admittedly, the industry has made many missteps over the years. Moreover, the many flaws in this bill were probably pre-ordained by the expedited legislative procedures—adopted under the guise of an “emergency”—by which the congressional leadership chose to craft this bill. However, to reject this imperfect solution for an imperfect industry solely because it could have been better makes little sense.

Like my constituents, I am also astonished by the actions of overpaid, out of touch executives at these companies. We need to pursue further reforms in their compensation. But if

we focus today on only the few individuals at the top of the companies, we will lose sight of the larger reality: Failure to act will cost the jobs of hundreds of thousands of average, hardworking Americans. It would also deprive our Nation of an industrial sector vital for us to remain an innovative global leader and manufacturer in the twenty-first century.

America needs its own automotive industry. I have always owned American cars. I believe in the American workforce, the thousands of men and women who make the automobiles on which we rely. They do not fly on corporate jets. They certainly do not make millions of dollars. We need to help them in their time of need.

Experts estimate that if the Congress does not provide this initial bridge loan and the automakers do fail, 2.5 million jobs will be lost. The Big Three employ 240,000 workers, suppliers and dealerships provide 800,000 jobs, and some 1.4 million jobs are dependent on the auto manufacturers. In my congressional district, some 500 workers at Rieter Automotive in Bloomsburg produce carpets for General Motors, and these workers and their families would experience undue hardship if we allow the American automotive industry to fail.

Moreover, unemployment numbers released for November indicate this country lost 533,000 jobs in that month alone. The current unemployment rate sits at 6.7 percent. We simply cannot allow those already devastating numbers to swell further.

In addition, the loss of the industry would result in a sizable drop in government revenue, just when annual deficits have run away and our national debt soars. Unemployment assistance will skyrocket and thousands of American breadwinners will lose their homes and even the ability to feed their children. The costs of inaction will therefore be catastrophic.

Surely we all agree that the industry teeters on the precipice of disaster. Additionally, most agree that the global economic crisis bears a good deal of blame for the automakers' collective misfortune. Importantly, the industry has appropriately conceded that they deserve a large share of blame. They were reluctant to diversify their fleets of cars to suit demand and to inoculate themselves against market volatility in the price of oil.

Earlier this year, consumers quickly lost their taste for large sport utility vehicles in favor of small, fuel-efficient cars as automakers for too long ignored this shift. The automakers failed to trim costs appropriately. They retained too many unnecessary white collar jobs. As we all now know, they infamously provided private jets to transport executives across the country, all the while paying those very executives \$20 million-plus pay packages.

Over the last few years, the automakers have come to recognize the urgency of their plight by engaging in substantive changes in their corporate structures. They have now presented long-term viability plans to the Congress, and they seem intent on getting the job done. This bill—if its oversight provisions are dutifully carried out by the Executive Branch—attempts to ensure that the necessary transformations occur. As a start, the automakers have expressed that wide-scale restructuring has already begun, and at considerable cost.

This bill contains many thoughtful conditions. Executive compensation limits, taxpayer